



Plenary sitting

B9-0198/2023

12.4.2023

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the challenges facing the Republic of Moldova
(2023/2595(RSP))

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on behalf of the PPE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the challenges facing the Republic of Moldova
(2023/2595(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Moldova,
 - having regard to the Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Moldova, of the other part¹, which includes a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area and which fully entered into force on 1 July 2016,
 - having regard to the Republic of Moldova’s application for EU membership, submitted on 3 March 2022,
 - having regard to the Commission’s Analytical Report following the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council – Commission Opinion on the Republic of Moldova’s application for membership of the European Union of 1 February 2023 (SWD(2023)0032),
 - having regard to the Association Implementation Report on the Republic of Moldova of 6 February 2023 (SWD(2023)0041),
 - having regard to the European Council conclusions of 25 March 2022,
 - having regard to the final statement and recommendations of the 13th EU-Moldova Parliamentary Association Committee of 23 March 2023,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Republic of Moldova has been disproportionately affected by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, mainly due to the arrival of more than 700 000 refugees since the invasion began – 107 000 of whom have stayed – which is the highest number per capita for all countries that have received refugees from Ukraine, but also due to lost trade as well as increased energy and transport prices;
- B. whereas the Republic of Moldova submitted its application to join the EU on 3 March 2022, attesting to the long-standing determination of the Moldovan authorities and a large part of the population to advance Moldova’s European integration;
- C. whereas on 1 February 2023 the Commission published its analytical report on Moldova’s alignment with the EU *acquis* assessing the country’s overall capacity to fulfil the obligations of membership;
- D. whereas on 6 February 2023 the Association Implementation Report on the Republic of Moldova was published reviewing its implementation of reforms under the EU-

¹ OJ L 260, 30.8.2014, p. 4.

Moldova Association Agreement since October 2021;

- E. whereas Moldova will host the next European Political Community summit in Chişinău on 1 June 2023, thereby proving its ambitious and resolute pro-European stance on foreign policy;
 - F. whereas the Republic of Moldova overcame the substantial logistical blockages at its border with Ukraine by deploying additional specialised border guard staff;
 - G. whereas the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) supports Moldova's and Ukraine's efforts to effectively manage their common border;
1. Welcomes Moldova's condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine; welcomes the government's pledge to adopt the EU's restrictive measures against Russia; commends Moldova's continuing solidarity with Ukrainian refugees and its recent decision to grant them temporary protection in line with relevant EU legislation; calls on the Commission to continue delivering much needed humanitarian support to ease the burden on the Moldovan state;
 2. Strongly condemns the repeated violations of Moldova's airspace by Russian missiles, Russia's repeated threats to invade Moldova, its plans to overthrow Moldova's democratically elected government and parliament, as well as Russia's fierce hybrid warfare waged through energy blackmail, disinformation campaigns – such as blaming the national authorities for the global energy crisis that people are facing or sending messages to law enforcement officers asking them not to listen to commanders and disobey orders – disruption of the food supply chain, attempts by the Wagner Group to recruit citizens of the Republic of Moldova, in particular from Transnistria and Găgăuzia, repeated protests staged by the Kremlin-backed Shor party and financed with illegal resources and attempts to stir up mass unrest in order to change the political order and Moldova's European path;
 3. Welcomes the Swedish Presidency's proposal to establish a civilian common foreign and security policy mission for Moldova to provide support in countering cyber and hybrid threats and disinformation; calls on the European External Action Service to finalise its crisis management plan for Moldova and calls on the Member States to unanimously and swiftly approve the mission in order to allow its swift deployment;
 4. Emphasises the Republic of Moldova's role as a regional security provider, in particular since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine; welcomes the substantial increase in European Peace Facility (EPF) support to Moldova in 2022 for fostering the modernisation of the Moldovan Armed Forces; calls on the Member States to swiftly agree on 2023 EPF budget support in order to enhance Moldova's defence capacities, in particular its air defence and air surveillance capacities, and to help the country face increased security challenges;
 5. Encourages Moldova's efforts to tackle organised and serious international and transnational crime; calls on the Commission to boost assistance to Moldovan law enforcement agencies for the prevention of the above-mentioned types of crime; welcomes Moldova's enhanced cooperation with the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement

Training (CEPOL) and Frontex, which mean that it has become a provider of security for itself and the EU; invites the Commission and the Council to strengthen the capabilities that these institutions are deploying in Moldova; welcomes the close cooperation between the EU and Moldova in the framework of the EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova; calls in this regard for the EU Support Hub to be strengthened, including by creating and maintaining contact points in the relevant EU institutions and by providing additional EU financial assistance for its operational activities;

6. Stresses the importance of a holistic approach to security and calls on the Commission and the Council to support the Republic of Moldova in further developing the instruments and mechanisms for joint evaluations, risk assessments, and shared lessons learned and knowledge;
7. Recalls its support for a comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova with a special status for the Transnistrian region; encourages all confidence-building measures designed to increase trust between Chişinău and Tiraspol and to avoid destabilisation;
8. Condemns Russia's continued energy blackmail, which has provoked the gravest energy crisis in Moldova's history and was an attempt to destabilise the country; praises the Moldovan government for its efficient handling of the crisis and for its efforts to increase its energy security through the diversification of supply sources, consumption reduction, the 'gas for electricity' agreement with Tiraspol, the purchasing of energy on the European market and the development of interconnectivity infrastructure (e.g. the Isaccea-Vulcanesti and Suceava-Balti high-voltage power lines); praises it for protecting its citizens through a compensation plan for the most vulnerable groups by means of the Energy Vulnerability Fund;
9. Calls on the Commission to support the development and expansion of the Port of Giurgiuleşti's capacity and infrastructure as part of the solution to regional food security concerns and in order to create a positive regional economic impact;
10. Welcomes the fact that EU-Moldova relations have become closer over the past year; praises Moldova's considerable efforts to fulfil the nine steps identified in the Commission's opinion as necessary for advancing towards future EU membership;
11. Calls for the start of EU accession negotiations with Moldova by the end of 2023 after the nine recommendations in the Commission's opinion have been implemented; believes that Moldova's EU membership represents a geostrategic investment in a united and strong Europe and that it equates to showing leadership, resolve and vision; calls on the Commission, in this regard, to continue delivering strategic assistance to the Republic of Moldova;
12. Supports the calls for an innovative, complementary and flexible interaction between the implementation of the Association Agreement and the accession negotiation process, thereby allowing for the gradual integration of Moldova into both the EU single market and relevant sectoral programmes, including access to EU funds in the relevant areas;

13. Acknowledges the importance of the EU's comprehensive support package mobilising over EUR 1.09 billion in loans and grants since October 2021 to strengthen Moldova's resilience, including budget support, macro-financial assistance, humanitarian aid and assistance under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism; calls on the Commission to swiftly disburse the rest of the current EUR 150 million Macro Financial Assistance (MFA) for the Republic of Moldova and the EUR 105 million in budgetary support announced in November 2022; welcomes the additional EUR 145 million increase in the MFA proposed by the Commission on 24 January 2023; calls for a rapid adoption of the proposal in order to allow its disbursement during the course of 2023;
14. Calls on the Commission to without delay prepare the support package for Moldova requested by the European Council on 23 March 2023 in order to strengthen the country's resilience, security, economy and energy supplies in the face of destabilising activities by external actors and to support its accession path towards the EU;
15. Welcomes the temporary liberalisation measures to support Moldova's economy by granting annual duty-free tariff rate quotas to overcome the loss of its export markets; urges the Commission to consider Moldova's request for the permanent liberalisation of tariff rate quotas in order to ensure predictability and earn investors' trust;
16. Welcomes Moldova's accession to the EU4Health programme; calls on the Commission to offer additional support to Moldova for the launch and implementation of the EU4Health programme;
17. Calls on the Commission to incorporate Moldova into EU instruments, agencies and programmes, such as: the Connecting Europe Facility, the Single Market Programme, the Digital Europe Programme, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, the European Environment Agency, the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC), the EU Joint Procurement of medical countermeasures mechanism, DiscoverEU and the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation;
18. Calls on EU institutions and EU Member States to ensure the implementation of short- and long-term solutions for reducing and abolishing roaming charges between Moldova and the EU, such as aligning tariffs on voice roaming between operators on a reciprocal basis, voluntary agreements between European and Moldovan operators and amending the Annex to the Association Agreement on EU legislation harmonisation in order to extend the 'roam like at home' regime to the Republic of Moldova;
19. Encourages the Commission to second EU officials to Moldovan ministries to provide training courses and exchange of best practices; welcomes the decision by the Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations to increase its staff capacity working on Moldova and calls for a dedicated unit for Moldova to be established;
20. Stresses the importance of providing Moldova access to EU pre-accession financial instruments as soon as possible; calls on the Commission to present a proposal to revise the 2021 Regulation establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III) as soon as feasible, which should include an increase in the overall IPA III budget;
21. Welcomes the extension of the EU-Moldova Agreement on the Liberalisation of Road

Freight Transport until 30 June 2024, which will allow Moldova to make full use of alternative export routes in order to support its economy; welcomes Moldova's involvement in the work of the Transport Community and encourages further cooperation in order to pave the way to Moldova's full membership of the Transport Community Treaty as well as the establishment of a Transport Community Representative office in Chişinău; calls on the Transport Community Secretariat to support the development of an action plan for the transposition of the EU transport *acquis* into national legislation;

22. Commends the decisive steps taken by the government to improve the functioning of the judiciary, including the progress achieved in the pre-vetting procedure for new members of the Superior Council of the Magistracy and the Superior Council of Prosecutors; underlines, however, that transparency, integrity and accountability in the justice sector must be ensured in line with the recommendations of the Venice Commission; recalls the importance of the quality and sustainability of reforms;
23. Welcomes the measures taken to fight corruption, such as the implementation of the legislation on trials *in absentia*; calls on the Moldovan authorities to substantially step up their efforts and actions to ensure a credible track record on prosecutions and convictions; calls for strengthened cooperation between EU Member States and the Moldovan authorities in investigating the 2014 bank fraud and, in particular, in ensuring the repatriation of stolen assets and prosecuting those responsible;
24. Welcomes the progress in the prosecution of a number of high-profile corruption cases and in the cases relating to a USD 1 billion bank fraud; takes notes, in this regard, of the decision of the United States of America and the United Kingdom to sanction two fugitive oligarchs along with a larger group of individuals and entities for their involvement in corruption and Kremlin-linked efforts to interfere in Moldova's democratic elections;
25. Calls for the EU institutions and Member States to swiftly create a separate sanctions regime targeting Moldovan individuals known to have corrupted political and economic institutions so that their financial power and capacity for destabilisation can be reduced;
26. Welcomes Moldova's commitment to increase its efforts to comply with the 'de-oligarchisation' requirement in the Commission's opinion; welcomes the draft law on 'de-oligarchisation', the legislation on media ownership and the adoption of the new strategy on the management of state property, state enterprises and entities with state capital 2022-2030; urges the authorities, however, to address the Venice Commission's recommendations to adopt a systemic approach aimed at strengthening the institutions and legislation relating to preventing monopolies, to competition policy, political parties, elections, taxation and fighting corruption and money laundering; calls on the Commission to clarify the 'de-oligarchisation' process, which is described in the nine recommendations as 'eliminating excessive influence of vested interests in economic, political and public life';
27. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member

States, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and the President, Government and Parliament of the Republic of Moldova.